

CORRESPONDENCE.

786 LAFAYETTE AVE.,
BROOKLYN, N. Y., MAY 21, 1889.

George Francis Train is generally known as a crank when he is not considered a lunatic, but mad or eccentric, the children adore him. There is probably not a man on the face of the earth to-day who has so many friends among the little ones. Mothers trust him implicitly, and are always pleased to have their brood under his wing. He is sane and wise enough to tell the proper stories, and is most judicious in his management, and can compel instant obedience from the most fractious and wilful. The picnic which Mr. Train gave the children last Saturday was a most enjoyable affair. It took two horse-cars to transport the party to Central Park. The children were of assorted sizes, all the way from tiny tots to ten year olds. Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Train has not tasted food for twenty days, he was as bright and cheery and apparently as strong as ever.

James D. Fish is once more a free man. He reached his Brooklyn home last Saturday evening. His daughter, who has been so faithful in her love and so unremitting in her attentions, made everything pleasant for the journey from Auburn, and protected him at every point. Mr. Fish has many influential friends, and a few of the most intimate ones were on hand to welcome him. A prominent banker told me the other day that he felt sure that Mr. Fish was "more sinned against than sinning," and that if the old man could be induced to tell what he really knew of the doings of Ferdinand Ward & Co. that the budget would astonish the world. "But," said he, "I do not believe the rack itself would extort this information. A squarer man than Fish in every relation of life I never knew, until his unfortunate connection with Ward."

Mrs. Francis Hodgson Burnett is credited with saying that "if she had known the penalties of fame, she would never have written a line," Mrs. Burnett's letter to the *Critic*, while very bright and very keen, and not lacking in logic, had better never have seen light. If she had kept it a week to think over, it probably never would have. She rushed into print under the smart indignation of a lot of penny-a-liners, who were not worth noticing, and whose reports would not have made a lasting impression upon any one. But Mrs. Burnett's scolding contradictions just clinched the foolish impression in many a mind. The woman who can do such work as Mrs. Burnett has done, ought to be so far above the foolish gossip of the crowd as never to hear it.

Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox made the same mistake in replying to Miss Atherton, and now the latter lady seems to find justification for her unkind and unwomanly paragraphs because of the publicity given to this correspondence by Mrs. Wilcox. She allowed these miserable letters to be published. This was probably an act of good nature on her part towards Mr. Bok, who wanted something spicy for his readers. But it was an indiscretion all the same, and considered in the light of subsequent events, a very stupid one.

I am told that there is serious talk of a great temperance demonstration in Brooklyn this coming fall. It will last for a week, and this "Third City of the Union" certainly needs it, for although the "City of Churches" and homes, it is also the city of drunkenness. Dr. Talmage's Tabernacle and the Academy of Music are reported to be the places where this great reform movement is to be inaugurated. The leading ministers and priests and temperance orators from the principal cities of this country and England, are to be invited to take part in the effort to save this beautiful city from the dominion of rum caused by the gang element in local politics. The Sunday Law is a farce. Drunken men are seen in all parts of the city emerging from the side doors of liquor saloons, and the policemen across the street is instructed by "the heelers" to whom he owes his place not to see them. In this movement the Catholics and Protestants are to unite, and endeavor to bring about a radical change in the administration of public affairs.

"Miss Grace E. Dodge, one of the members of the New York Board of Education is, I suppose, a very masculine woman in appearance," a correspondent writes, and adds, "please tell me all about her."

My friend could not have made a greater mistake. Miss Dodge is essentially feminine in manner, voice and appearance. She is tall, well developed, with the proper waist for her height, and the proper feet for her weight. Her complexion, hair and eyes are light. She has a strong mouth filled with splendid teeth, and when she smiles—which is most of the time—her face is radiant. She dresses plainly and sensibly, and though she is reported to be worth four millions, she calls herself a working woman, and is on the list of terms with all her poor and industrious sisters. When Miss Dodge appears on the stage to address the various organizations of working women, it gives one a new and satisfactory sensation to observe the delight on the girls' faces. They have tried their best and have not found her wanting. She gives of her means, her sympathy, her advice. She is a woman among women, and labors as hard as any of them. She knows them by name, and visits them in their clubs and their homes if necessary. As a member of the New York Board of Education Miss Dodge is also a success. ELEANOR KIRK.

Two men lost in an African underground labyrinth.

Left in the Total Darkness in a Counterpart of the Residence of Haggard's "She"—The Mysterious Newfound Dog.

The city of Pretoria, capital of the Transvaal, South Africa, is located in a most beautiful spot. It stands in a valley between two ranges of mountains clothed with rich, dark verdure all the year round.

Vines loaded with ripening grapes, monthly roses and pomegranates forming a blaze of bloom amidst the flood of sunshine shimmering like golden water. Under these mountain ranges are vast caverns, only a few of which have been entered, and these only partly explored.

These caverns are the original Haggard's caves of the Amahaga, in which the wonderful "She" dwelt and ruled. Right under this mountain and through these dark caverns runs a clear, sparkling river of water.

The source of this river, which furnishes the water supply for this city, has never been discovered. A curious fact is that its waters are highest during the dry season. This points to the theory that it is fed by rain, and that these rains do not reach the river till about four to five months after they fall.

This river is inhabited by fish and a strange kind of crabs and lobsters, all of which have no eyes. This species of aquatic animals have been bred in and inhabited this dark Stygian stream for thousands of years, have never had any use for eyes, and so, after many generations, that organ had entirely disappeared from their structure.

Into the bowels of the earth. Some friends of mine, two ladies and three gentlemen, went on an exploring expedition through this cavern, got lost in its maze and were three days before they found their way back to the outer world. Mr. Saunders, of the American consulate at Cape May, thus relates their experience while in the bowels of the earth.

Mr. J. H. Leroy, of the Northern Pacific railway of the United States of America, Mr. John Sidney and two ladies, Miss Webster and Miss Goethe and myself started to explore the Fountain cave. Armed with two lamps and provisions enough for two meals, we started.

We got through the entrance, which is very narrow, with difficulty. Going a few yards ahead, we found a light, the lamps were proceeding we found on each side of the main passage numerous side ways and alleys apparently hewn out of the solid rock.

All around there were evidences of the caves being inhabited by swarms of bats which constantly kept flying in our faces. Pursuing our way for a considerable time, we came to a spot where the roof of the cavern, hitherto lofty, slanted down, gradually becoming lower and lower until we were unable to walk erect.

Equally we came to where the floor was on an inclined plane and got more head room. We then descended a steep hill, at the foot of which was a dead end, which completely barred further progress in that direction.

On the right hand a narrow passage presented itself just wide enough to permit of our walking single file. The air was cool and bracing, became damp and a cold clammy dew settled on our faces.

To the sides of the passage hung a pale, slimy, snake-like substance which to the touch produced a shivery sense of abhorrence. We began to wish ourselves well out of the underground. However, being lost, there was nothing for it but to go on.

We walked up this passage a distance, I should judge of three hundred yards, when we arrived at an octagonal court, from which ran eight different passages, the four main ones being about a width of fifty feet, and the four narrow ones about four feet each.

Under our feet could be heard a sound as of the running of a river and the violent breaking of water upon rocks. We could perceive no mode of descent, and the ground under our feet seemed solid.

Being weary, and the ladies somewhat faint, we resolved to go back, altogether disappointed with the result of our exploration. However, before returning again we refreshed ourselves with the victuals we had brought and, fortified by a few draughts of Cape sherry, felt our spirits rise, and curiously as to the cause of the sound under our feet, getting the better of our judgment we began searching for a way to descend, and finally found a place where there were stone steps at irregular intervals.

An unpleasant situation. Sidney and I descended, leaving Leroy and the ladies above. We followed these steps for about fifty feet. The descent was very difficult, as the light of the lanterns grew feeble. However, we arrived on a broad platform of level ground.

The sound of the water had by this time increased to that of a roaring torrent, and on our left we saw the black, ink stream rushing past. We sounded and found the river very deep and cold.

Passing along the banks the air became heavier still, and the lamp, which had been burning more feebly, went out altogether. Breathing became very difficult, owing to the absence of oxygen.

In this dreadful place and in total darkness we were stumbling about trying to find the steps, by which to ascend, for hours, until becoming quite weary we sat down and fell into a torpid, heavy sleep. How long we remained in this state I do not know.

On awaking, with a great effort we aroused ourselves, and finally got on a passage, which we followed. As we went the noise of the water became less audible, and finally we lost the sound altogether. Still there was no ray of light; nothing but thick darkness and a noisome, pestilential air.

YOUNG FOLKS' COLUMN.

A HALF HOUR'S ENTERTAINMENT FOR OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

A Few Facts About That Most Picturesque Character in American Frontier Life, the Cowboy—Important Articles in a Cowboy's Outfit.

The great cattle ranges are being slowly but surely fenced in and covered by homesteaders, and the cowboy is losing his occupation. Before this much-told-of and written about individual disappears from view forever we will endeavor to enlighten our young readers about the real life of a cowboy, giving the following items gleaned from Golden Days:

A COWBOY. The most important article in a cowboy's outfit is the "chuck wagon." This is the wagon of the herd, the cook, the feed, and it is a common prairie schooner, covered with canvas to keep out the rain. Next to the "chuck wagon" is the pony, which usually costs about \$25, and is a vicious little animal liable to "buck" every time it is mounted. The owner of the herd supplies each boy with blankets, saddle, bridle, and gun, but as soon as they have money enough of their own they buy these things for themselves. The lasso preferred is made of horse hair, and is flexible and strong. To learn to use the lasso takes from four weeks to six months constant practice, and then some men never learn. By the way, the cowboy never loses "lasso," but "rops." Other essentials of the cowboy outfit are the repeating rifle and the six shooter.

The pride of the cowboy's heart is his hat. These are of felt, with broad brim, and cost anywhere from one dollar to ten, twenty, or more, according to the decorations. Sometimes these consist of a leather band, with a clinking brass chain, sometimes gold lace and cord, and sometimes a band of equine. Next to his hat come the cowboy's boots, which are made of the best leather, with long legs and high heels. A cowboy cares little about his clothes, what they look like, provided they are stout, and he usually wears leather or buckskin trousers.

The cowboy's fare consists of bread, bacon, beef and coffee; butter and milk are almost unknown to him. His life is full of hardships and dangers, and the wages he receives are small. The cowboy sleeps in the open air unless he prefers to crawl under the "chuck" wagon in case of rain. Boys who think of becoming cowboys should ponder these facts.

Counting Out Rhymes. The following are a few of the many rhymes used by boys and girls who shall take the first rhymes in many minor games:

Anna, manna, mona, mika;
Barcelona, bona, strica;
Ann, warr, frack;
Hullo, halloo, waw, wack;
This, also, is subject to countless variations: "Barcelona" becomes "mancana," etc. One form ends in:

Buddy, gully, took out goes you;
Anna, manna, dippy dick;
Buddy, daisy, daisy, daisy;
Hitcha, pitcha, dominichia;
Hon, pok, tush.

In some districts the third line is given as: "Houdich, poudich, domoudichia," and in others, "Houdich, potichia," etc. "Tush" may also become "tush" or "tusk."

THE COUNT OUT. Hady, adady, tipity, tip;
Under, tony, tony, tony;
Gad, throst, country tody;
Tany, tony, tip;
Estam, peatum, penny pie,
Baby, baby, stickum, stick;
Stand you out daisy.

Besides rhymes of the character of the above, i. e., consisting of a mixture of gibberish with disconnected words, there are many rhymes containing no rhyming words, but possessing in general a jingle easily recognizable.

One, two, three,
Nanny, nanny, a daisy;
The dead dead and Nanny cried;
Out goes she!

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
Mary at the cottage gate,
Eating grapes of a plate,
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

This is given also, "Plums" in place of "grapes," and "garden gate" for "cottage gate." When "cottage gate" ends the second line the counting stops at "four" to satisfy the rhyme.

The Story of a Gray Cat. The gray cat lived on a boat, and had a charming family of three gray kittens. No one thought she would forget to return to the boat on time; the gray plank was drawn in, the big wheel was round, and pussy came down the dock when the boat went round the wharf. Just imagine how surprised and delighted the kittens were when the next boat down the river brought pussy, who found her old home as soon as the boat touched the wharf. You would think that would be the last time she would go ashore alone. But, alas! the temptation to visit wharf boats was so strong that she got left somewhere on the Indiana side of the Ohio. This trip the seaward left the boat, and the kittens disappeared with him.

Three or four days afterward the "A" arrived from below, and the gray pussy came up on her. No one knows how she found out that the boat was below, and the river instead of down, for other boats had stopped at that place, but only this one going up the Cincinnati. Pussy was seen installed in her old home again, but the kittens were not, and she was lone some. So she went out on the wharf boat and found a poor, forlorn kitten, nearly as large as herself. This she carried in her mouth up to the cabin of the Golden Rule and placed it on a chair, and insisted that it should be noticed and caressed, nor moved the cat until it was supplied.

Don't Mention the Briers. It is not only a wise and happy thing to make the best of life, and always look on the bright side, for one's own sake, but it is a blessing to others. Fancy a man forever telling his family how much they cost him! A little sermon on this subject was unconsciously preached by a child one day last fall.

A man met a little fellow on the road carrying a basket of blackberries, and said to him: "Sammy, where did you get such nice berries?"

"Over there, sir, in the briars,"

"Want your mother to lead you to see you come home with a basketful of such nice, ripe fruit?"

"Yes, sir," said Sammy, "she always seems mighty glad when I hold up the berries, and I don't tell her anything about the briars in my feet."

The man rode on, reflecting that henceforth he would hold up the berries and save nothing about the briars.

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